

District 8 Leaders Enjoy First-Ever Retreat

Amadea de Groot

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The FFWPU leaders of the seven states of District 8 (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri) held their first retreat over the weekend of October 10 and 11, 2015, in the city of Ames, Iowa. The seven state pastors and their spouses attended, as did three young adult representatives from Minnesota and the District 8 representative, Amadea de Groot, with her family. Rev. Larry Krishnek and his wife, Akemi, the Cheon Il Guk special itinerant workers to America, also were invited to attend. In total, there were 20 persons.

The purpose was very simple: just get together. It was a time for District 8 leaders to relax, fellowship with one another and build relationships. The schedule was casual, and all presentations were styled as discussions led by those persons who had something to share.

On Saturday, they rented a conference room at the Iowa Arboretum for three discussions. Larry Krishnek was the first to speak. He told of his journey leading up to his appointment as an IW and his experiences since taking the post. Next, Mark Lincoln from Nebraska expressed his thoughts on different styles of church structures and their purposes. Lastly, Alan Jessen from Iowa related his questions about the future of the Unification movement and some of his inspirations from several of the Continuing Education classes developed by the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS).

Saturday night the group enjoyed a fun dinner at the historic Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa, just south of the state capital, Des Moines. Afterward everyone drove to the Des Moines River for an evening walk over a bridge illuminated with blue fluorescent lights. It was a perfect night with a clear sky. After leaving the bridge and the lights, they enjoyed a memorable walk under the stars.

The Sunday discussions took place at the hotel where they were staying and began with a passionate presentation from Dennis and Mayuri Hoffman of South Dakota. They told their story of tribal messiahship and their love for giving the Marriage Blessing.

“It was clear to everyone that this couple lives and breathes God’s word and the desire to bless people every day,” said Amadea de Groot.

Mayuri Hoffman prepared a binder for every state which consisted of her notes on True Father’s words about outreach and giving the Marriage Blessing, her tips on what to do, forms that are required and much more. Dennis Hoffman showcased a few slides of the Divine Principle DVD that he teaches from and told about his experience in teaching. It was a very powerful presentation featuring a lot of give and take with the other pastors.

Lastly, they heard from Cindy Pfeiffer of North Dakota who led everyone down memory lane. After Cindy recalled a few of her own experiences with True Father, she opened it up to everyone to relate their own most memorable experiences with True Father. It was an eye-glistening experience at times but also a time to laugh together. The young Unificationists encouraged their elders to record their life history and stories and document their incredible experiences for future generations.

The intimate discussion was a great way to get more personal with each other as well as a perfect way to close the retreat. Everyone agreed that the pastors’ retreat should become an annual event. The weekend provided opportunities for a lot of networking, some individual prayer time, exchanging personal life stories, and finding support in one another.